

LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

A SERIES OF LOCAL CASES



City of Cape Town, South Africa World heritage within a city border

SUMMARY: The City of Cape Town encompasses world class biodiversity and is one of only three cities in the world ranked as an urban biodiversity hotspot. It is located within the Cape Floral Kingdom (CFK), the smallest and most diverse of only six floral kingdoms in the world. It is also home to two UNESCO world heritage sites, provincial reserves, a national park and overlaps with two UNESCO biosphere reserves. The City is playing an active role in conjunction with local, national and international partners to protect and preserve this unique and priceless natural heritage.

Biodiversity & biodiversity management in Cape Town

UNESCO World Heritage Status and Biosphere Reserves

Cape Town forms part of two UNESCO world heritage sites: the Cape Floral Region Protected Area and Robben Island. The Cape Floral Region (largely synonymous with the CFK) is one of the richest areas for plants in the world, representing nearly 20% of Africa's flora in 0.5% of its area. Cape Town also overlaps with two UNESCO

Biosphere Reserves: the Kogelberg and Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserves and is nearby to the Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves are established to promote and demonstrate a balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere.



A Monkey Beetle (Hoplinidae) pollinating the Cape bulb, *Ixia dubia*.

Threats to Cape Town's unique and endangered biodiversity

The Cape Town area contains outstanding floral diversity and endemism, which is among the highest worldwide. Seventy percent of the CFK's 9,600 plant species are found nowhere else on earth. Cape Town also contains remnants of Critically Endangered lowland Sand Fynbos, Alluvium Fynbos and Renosterveld vegetation, which are among

the most endangered vegetation types in the world. The Cape Town lowlands area has the highest concentration of threatened plants per area of remaining vegetation in the world. Like most urban ecosystems, the loss of habitat to development and urban sprawl poses one of the greatest threats to Cape Town's biodiversity.

The City of Cape Town's biodiversity strategy and strategic objectives

The Biodiversity Strategy is a systematic plan of action for ensuring the conservation of Cape Town's rich biodiversity. Adopted in 2003, it is dictated by the city's Integrated Metropolitan Environmental Policy. The strategic objectives, which are core to the Biodiversity Strategy, include:

- the establishment and effective management of a network of biodiversity areas and nodes;
- to promote, establish and manage open space as a critical component in the success and functioning of the Biodiversity Network which complete and connect the Biodiversity Network;
- to ensure conservation and protection of freshwater aquatic systems, and associated biodiversity;
- to develop and implement an effective and efficient city-wide invasive alien species management programme.

Managing biodiversity through partnerships in Cape Town

At present there are 23 nature reserves in Cape Town which are managed by the city's Biodiversity Management Branch. The Biodiversity Strategy recognizes the importance of partnerships in achieving its strategic objectives and the city works closely with CapeNature and SANParks to ensure common goals are achieved. The City of Cape Town was also one of the founding members of CAPE (Cape Action for People and Environment): a public-private partnership program that aims to conserve the CFR in a way that will deliver significant benefits to the people of the region.

City of Cape Town - Table Mountain National Park Partnership

The City of Cape Town - Table Mountain National Park Partnership aims to facilitate cooperation between the City and Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) in respect of the urban interface, strategic planning and development coordination.

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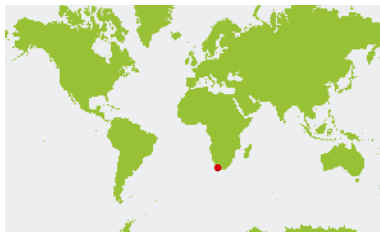


Table Mountain and Table Bay viewed from Blaauwberg Hill, showing recently burnt renosterveld vegetation at the summit.

Involvement in international initiatives

As ICLEI member, the City of Cape Town hosted over 600 delegates from around the world at the ICLEI World Congress 2006. Following this, Cape Town initiated ICLEI's Local Action for Biodiversity Project. The City also plays host to the ICLEI Africa Secretariat and the offices of Traffic, Conservation International, the Global Invasive Species Programme and the IUCN, which are all based at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

City contacts & profile



Located in the heart of the world's smallest floral kingdom, it is perhaps the most biodiverse city in the world.

THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN is located on the Atlantic coast in the southwest of South Africa. With a population of around 3.5 million, it is the second most populous city in the country. It is also the provincial capital of the Western Cape Province as well as the legislative capital of South Africa. Cape Town is geographically the largest city in South Africa with an area of 2,455 km² which results in a relatively low population density. Cape Town is internationally recognized for its outstanding natural setting, particularly for its harbour, Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula and the Cape of Good Hope.

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LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY is a global urban biodiversity initiative of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in cooperation with IUCN. This pilot project of 21 cities around the globe focuses on the key roles that local governments play in conserving the world's biodiversity and retaining the relationship between people and nature. See: www.iclei.org/lab; lab@iclei.org

COUNTDOWN 2010 is a powerful network of more than 600 partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Each partner commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The secretariat – hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010. See: www.countdown2010.org

CITIES & BIODIVERSITY is an initiative of local governments and UN agencies to increase awareness on the relevant role of cities and towns for conserving and managing biodiversity. See: www.iclei.org/biodiversity

THE "CITIES & BIODIVERSITY CASE SERIES" is started in 2008 on the occasion of the UN CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) 9 in Bonn/Germany in May 2008. Funding is provided by UNEP, with co-funding from ICLEI, IUCN and the City of Bonn. The case descriptions are compiled by the "Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB)" project team in the ICLEI Africa Secretariat and ICLEI's International Training Centre.

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